

Good Morning. My name is Marilyn Smith. I worked for the State of California, Santa Clara County and Valley Transportation Authority for a total of 35 years, but some of that was part time when my children were small. My husband does not have a good retirement, so I will support us both when he completely retires. I retired in 2005 and I'm now 61.

Few public education employees embark on their careers with an idea of achieving great financial gain. But they do expect and deserve fair compensation within the constraints of public budgets. One of the consolations offsetting less-than-stellar paychecks has been the anticipation of a secure retirement benefit at the end of the work rainbow.

For the last 15 years of my working life, I was a computer systems analyst. I could have probably made double my VTA salary if I had chosen to leave and go to the private sector. But, I chose a career in public service and stayed partially because of my pension. If I didn't have a decent retirement to look forward to, I would have had to make choices to leave VTA and earn more each year at CISCO or Google or Yahoo.

Workers and their unions should negotiate wages and benefits with their employers in the public sector. That's the way it is in the private sector. I am a proud retired member of Service Employees International Union, Local 521.

I am thankful that I have a secure retirement. Every person who works their whole life should have the right to a secure retirement and health care benefits. There should not be a lesser retirement for future public workers. Mr. Richman's mean spirited initiative needs to be opposed and defeated.

Thank you for listening.